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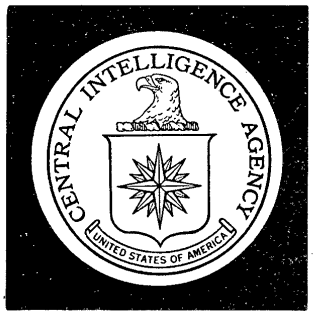


# *The President's Daily Brief*

*25 August 1969*

**19**

*Top Secret*

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## VIETNAM

The new premier, Tran Thien Khiem, was to some degree a controversial figure during the intrigues and coups of the post-Diem era, and he probably has some important enemies. There has been little adverse criticism of him since mid-1967, however, when Thieu brought him back from his "exile" as ambassador to the US and later to Taiwan. Like Thieu, Khiem is an ambitious man and something of a lone wolf. Thieu and Khiem have worked well together in the past two years, and there is no reason now to doubt that they will continue to cooperate with each other.

The president and his new prime minister probably discussed future cabinet appointments before Khiem took the job--Thieu seems to have had a pretty good idea of the slate he wants--but we do not yet know how many potential ministers have been firmly lined up.

## MIDDLE EAST

Muslims everywhere are still indignant about the fire in the al-Aqsa mosque, but have not as yet adopted a specific course of action. Their UN delegates decided Saturday not to call for a Security Council meeting. The foreign ministers of the Arab states, meeting in Cairo, may endorse the suggestion that an Arab summit meeting be held soon.

Most Muslim leaders have either ignored or rejected Israeli statements of regret, and Israel's detention of the alleged arsonist is generally scorned as an unsubtle subterfuge.


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The incident will reinforce opposition to Israeli occupation of territory the Arabs claim as their own, because it symbolizes the impossibility of permitting Israeli custody of Muslim holy places.

## CZECHOSLOVAKIA

The introduction of a series of repressive legal provisions last week clearly reflects the increased influence of pro-Soviet hardliners in the government and suggests they fear more demonstrations may be coming. Individuals arrested for either potential or real opposition to the regime face severe punishment and loss of their civil rights.

Rude Pravo, the main party daily, inferred in a recent article that Dubcek and former liberal leader Josef Smrkovsky were partly responsible for the demonstrations marking the first anniversary of the Soviet invasion. It is probably only a matter of time before Dubcek and Smrkovsky are demoted even further than they have been in the past year.

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## NORTH KOREA

Recent photography gives the first evidence that North Korea may intend to deploy Styx cruise missiles near the Demilitarized Zone. [redacted] 50X1




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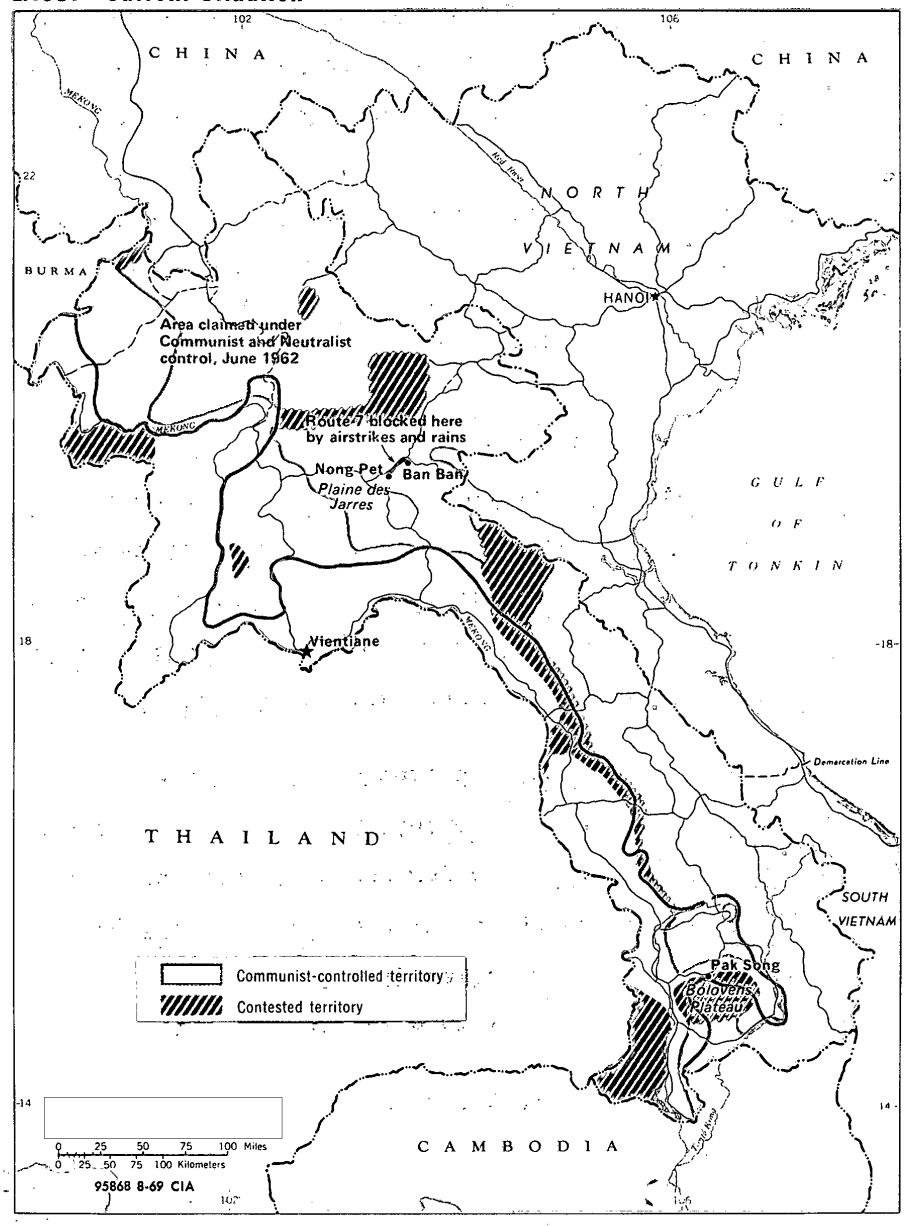
# LAOS: Current Situation

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[redacted] 50X1

## LAOS

Heavy monsoon rains and air strikes continue to hamper Communist forces in the north. [redacted] 50X1 50X1

In a belated reaction to the government offensive against Route 7, Communist forces on 22 August mounted several sharp probes against government forward positions south of the road. They will almost certainly continue to exert pressure in order to safeguard the flow of supplies into the Plaine des Jarres area.




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